DYNAMITE NEEDED IN "THE GREAT LOVER"

Property Man Fails to Provide the Subway Blasts That Punctuate Metropolitan Opera Performances

By FRANK WARD O'MALLEY.

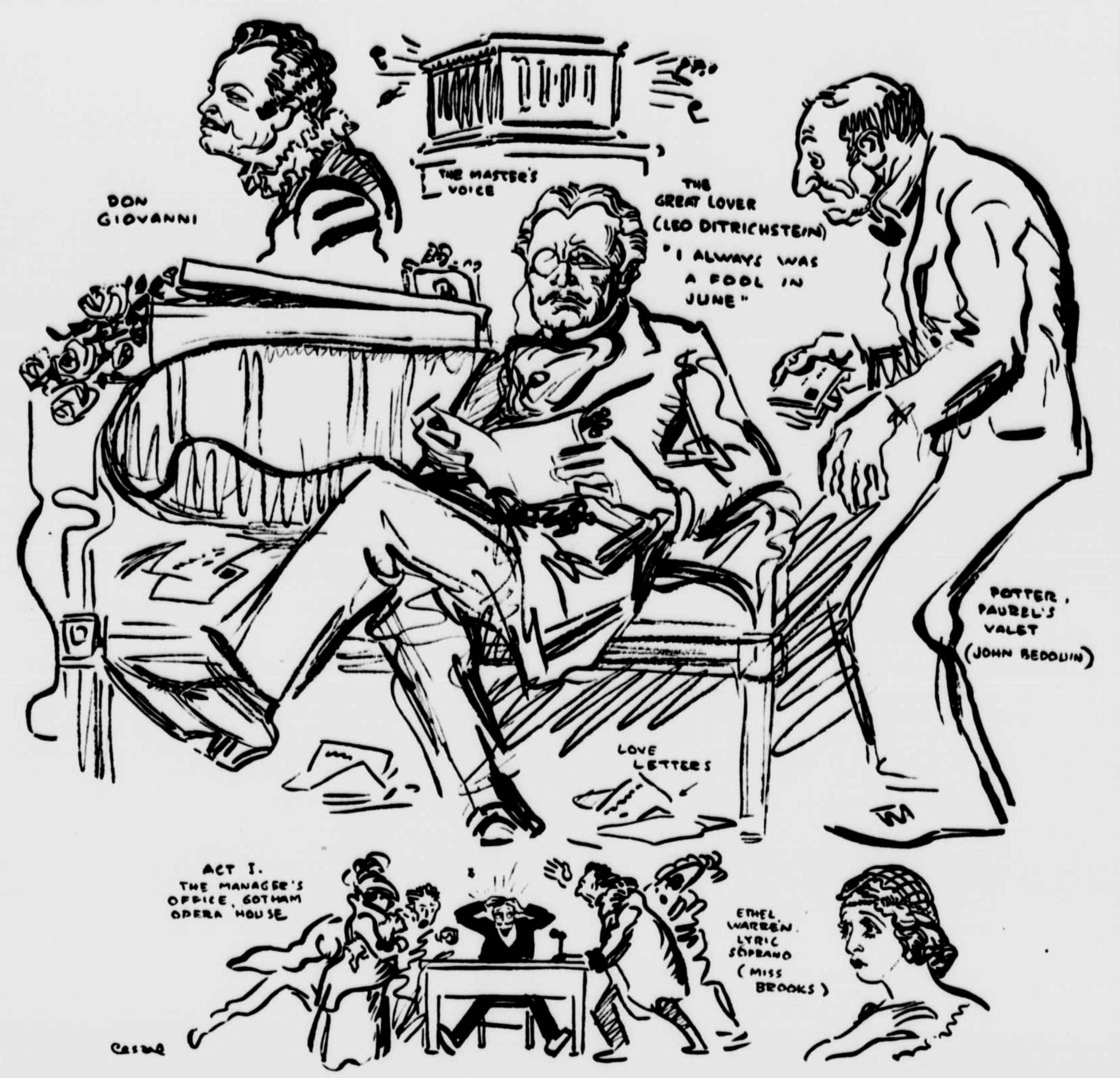
WHEN enough dramatic critics to make a mess had settled into their aisle seats on the night of Leo Ditrichstein's opening performance of "The Great Lover," some time back in the latter part of 1915, the death watch, after the curtain had gone up and down and up and down and up and down—making three acts in all—with next to no time left dashed off critiques in which some of the more bilious among the watch wondered. They wondered in print whether "The Great Lover" gave the first night audience a true picture of backstage life at, say, the Metropolitan Opera House, or an impression of grand opera life that the public believes (and hopes) is the real thing, but isn't.

In other words, the critics proved in print the next morning what a little group of serious thinkers made up entirely of the cartoonist and reporter most interested in this output to-day always has contended: that with newspapers going to press nervously while the newspaper trains that carry earlier editions to the hinterlands are jockeying for a good starting place in black railroad yards, the critics haven't sufficient time in which to analyze and then reassemble into print their impressions of a given performance. In justice to producer, playwright and players, a new play should be allowed to simmer along for weeks and then be looked over by a reporter and cartoonist selected from the leisure classes who have a whole week before them in which to record their impressions.

When, for instance, songster representatives of all the countries of the Allies and the Central Powers gather in "The Manager's Office of the Gotham Opera House" of the first act of "The Great Lover"—there's no such opera house as the Gotham, but let that pass—and begin to talk about themselves in eighteen different languages, including the Scandinavian, the uproar in a general way was quite like any quiet evening in Gatti-Gazatt's office at the Metropolitan except that one noise making device was missing. It's safe to say that every member of the death watch present the night "The Great Lover" opened has at some time been backstage at the Metropolitan Opera House, the music shop which the "Gotham Opera House" of the play is supposed to represent; and therefore the death watch, due to backstage experiences, while grasping the versimilitude of the "The Great Lover" opening act, had a disturbingly vague realization that there was something lacking among the general dynamics.

But, as has been said, the critics had no time during the few moments left to them between going to press and the final curtain of the Ditrichstein play to figure out precisely what it was that should have been there making a noise but wasn't. The German tenor was talking about himself in even louder tones than the Italian barytone at his elbow. In his own language every one on the stage, and there was a crowd of them, was telling simultaneously how good he was, all hollering it in Russian, Polish, Plattdeutsche and things in tones louder than the loudest noises liberated by the German tenor and the Italian barytone.

Furthermore, all over the stage was a collection of men and women songsters wearing patent leather shoes with gay cloth uppers and spats, the spats almost as loud as the private ankle display of the street shoes owned and sported along Fifth avenue by none other than Signor Antonio Scotti himself. Anybody from coast to coast who has an intimate acquaintance with the street boots of Signor Scott' will gather how loud was the footwear contributed to the racket aboard the stage when all the opera singers bust loose in the first act of "The Great Lover."



Nevertheless, as has been said, something was missing in the matter of noises. First night critics didn't get it. The reporter and cartoonist, with days to think it over, know. Sam Forrest, who staged "The Great Lover," should have spent a little money on a Colt .44 and an empty flour barrel and hired a stage hand to shoot the Colt into the barrel every now and then, so that people who know their Metropolitan Opera House for a season or two back wouldn't miss the detonations that for the past two seasons have been interrupting Metropolitan performances every time a blast is set off in the new subway extension excavations back of the Metropolitan in Manhattan's Seventh avenue. The blasts were missing, that's all.

Any regular operagoer who has come into New York from Rittenhouse Square, the Back Bay, Michigan avenue, Connecticut avenue, D. C., and all points west since the new subway began to interrupt opera remembers how the first act of, say, "Aida" goes since the compatriots of Signor Caruso began to blast out of Manhattan's solid rock a new subway a few feet west of the stage of the Metropolitan.

Enter the great Caroos in flowing robes, with his mind all made up to sing 'Celeste Aida." Hysteria. Ta-ra-a-ah! Se-s-s-s-sh, everybody.

"Tchay," remarks Caroos, "lessss—tay——"

"Stand back, men!" (The traffic cop out in Seventh avenue is speaking.) "Keep that red flag wavin', yuh big wop!"

"Ah—" (Caroos again.)

Rrrrrrump, BANG! (The subway blast.)

"Eee—dah! Tchay less-tay, Ah—eee—dah!" Caroos goes on. "Ci, swah swah eee (BANG!) blah! (BANG!) Blah; ei, blooey feeeen (BANG!) essss tra" (ZOWIE—BANG-BANG-BANG!!!)

What's the use? one might ask. Nevertheless Caroos goes through with the "Celeste Aida" stuff. And the arguments backstage in Gatti's office continue in eighteen languages, and the critics who overhear said arguments interrupted by the subway explosions go up from there to review the opening of "The Great Lover" and do not grasp the fact that because there are not any subway explosions in the opera scenes in the Ditrichstein show something, they know not what, is missing. So they make a dash for their typewriters as the final curtain is descending and take a fall out of the show.

The result of their hurried criticisms has been that every night when Leo Ditrichstein tries to battle his way through the box office line so that he can get to the stage door and Producers George Cohan and Sam Harris fight their way through the overflow in the lobby, the star and producers seem to be worried to death lest hasty first night criticisms cause the show to blow up. Worry over "The Great Lover" is one reason why George Cohan's hair is getting so gray. Every night that the management has to tell sixteen hundred dollars worth of potential ticket buyers that there are no more seats left young Mr. Cohan's hair not only gets grayer, but begins to moult onto his coat collar.

To begin at the very beginning of the story of "The Great Lover" it is necessary to pause first in the lobby of the theatre. Here it is that one grasps something of the cleverness of the man who staged the play, Sam Forrest. Mr. Forrest is the husband of the young lady known to theatregoers as Miss Mary Ryan, star of "The House of Glass," a domestic relation which long ago caused Mr. Forrest to be elected president of the theatrical organization known as the "Only Their Husbands' Club." And so the day that "The Great Lover" company assembled for a first rehearsal, along came Sam Forrest lugging under his arm a life sized picture of Miss Ryan. He got a step ladder, climbed it, hung Miss Ryan's photograph over the box office window and then started the first rehearsal. The picture of Miss Ryan is the first impression one gets of "The Great Lover" upon entering the theatre and the last and among the most vivid impression one carries away after the final curtain.

Next, to take up the story of "The Great Lover" in detail, as the curtain rises the Secretary of the Treasury and Mrs. McAdoo enter (or did last Monday night, at least), accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Field Malone. Wherefore the attention of the audience is cinched at once and comment runs fast and free.

"We're lucky," says everybody. "Betcha anything Dud Malone will stand up between acts and make a speech."

The money was placed right and left for a few minutes, some betting that Dud would make a speech on preparedness, others betting that he would speak on some other topic, and nobody betting that he wouldn't speak at all. Finally the ushers began to say "S-s-s-s-s-sh!" and the audience, realizing that the curtain was up, began to try to take its eyes off the McAdoo box party and pay a little attention to Leo Ditrichstein and his troupe.

The first moments of the first act had been blurred a bit because of the entrance of Dud Malone and the consequent excitement when it became noised about that Dud was present and possibly—probably—would make a speech upholding the Wilson Administration. The early inattention of the audience, however, did not seriously undermine the audience's appreciation of the play because Leo hadn't shown up on the stage so far, and it really is not until *Tenor Buffo Sparapani* enters that one grasps the beginning of the plot. *Sparapani's* opening sentence makes things clear.

"Nel mio hotel," *Sparapani* explains, "c'e una donna che mi tormenta; ogni volta che apro la porta della mio camera ela aspettandomi. Ogni volta che entro nella sala da pranzo si mette a una tavola vacina alla mia e mi fa gli occhi languidi."

Sparapani had everybody listening with acute intentness immediately. On every face was suspense.

"Tutti i giorno mi manda bigliette per la sua cameriera," *Sparapani* continued, and his opening speech is repeated here word for word so that those who haven't seen "The Great Lover" will have a fair understanding of the plot of the play when they come to town to see the play or the play finally goes out of Manhattan to see them. "Le tro mandato" (S. still speaking) "adrie che so no maritato, ma non ha vuto effeto—so no disperato. Dio Buono," he concluded, beginning to curse and swear and everything, "perche non si possono avere i carabinieri per arrestaria." (Prolonged applause.)

Supposing that anybody in the audi-

Otherwise the Great Back Stage Scene Is Replete With a Variety of International Noises

ence had muffed Mr. Sparapani's meaning no doubts remained the minute that *Mme. Treller Beinbrich*, the German soprano, came back at *Sparapani*.

"Swei wife!" cried *Mme. Treller Beinbrich*. "Oh, die Italianer!"

Posansky, the Russian basso buffo, had been trying to get a word in further to elucidate the plot. Now he got his chance.

"Ne mogu je ya dielat massage," he cried, apropos of nothing in particular because nobody so far had asked him for a massage—"na frolu. Pukajite postavit kushetku." (Laughter and applause and a general quickening of interest.)

"Entschuldigen sie, Herr Director," *Carl Losseck, Wagnerian tenor*, couldn't help saying at this point, "das ich so unaingemeldet herein trete—es ist niemand in der ansseren office. Ich ben ausser mir, aussir mir!"

"Ach!" cried *Mme. Treller Beinbrich* in German, "machen sie sich doch kein Fleck. Unmoeglich!"

The minute she cried "unmoeglich" it was all off. The subsequent excitement, however, among the audience held up the plot for a few moments and the lull was welcome to a reporter trying to take down Italian, German and Russian lines in long hand. Any reader who has followed the plot of "The Great Lover" so far probably realizes that connecting lines here and there were missed occasionally. The players spoke distinctly enough, but now and then it was impossible to take down all the lines because of the fact that the lights had been turned off out in the auditorium. It's safe to say, however, that enough of the text has been reproduced here to give any one an idea of the general trend of the piece.

Leo Ditrichstein happened onto the stage about this time speaking near English, but wearing a monocle, thus proving that professionally, at least, he is neutral. All the girls sat up and began to take a lot of notice.

"Gan recht," *Herr Losseck* couldn't help saying here, "lessen Sie sich das nicht gefallen. I am Koeniglich-Kaiserlich Oesterreicher Kammersanger," which is the full name of the Erie Railroad of Germany, thus showing that *Herr Losseck* now believed he was a railroad. *Posansky* couldn't stand for the statement, so he broke out all over in Russian.

"Oh," cried *Posansky*, "chen rad posnakomitsia."

So somebody called a cop.

The constant efforts made by Leo Ditrichstein from this time on to take a fall out of any language that came his way finally got him in the second act. As might be expected, he lost his voice. In the third act he was to hear the worst—his voice had gone for good and his future seemed hopeless. Although his doctor didn't tell him so in so many words, it was evident that unless he cut out trying to talk Russian and things his vocal cords would never become unravelled. Nevertheless, even though his means of earning a livelihood had gone perhaps forever all was not hopeless from a financial standpoint; for in the last act, showing Leo's room in a hotel, the contents of the umbrella stand at right stage shows that he still owned not one but three perfectly good umbrellas.

Furthermore, when *Ethel Warren*, a lyric soprano, sadly takes the engagement sparkler off the third finger of her left hand in the last act and tries to give it back to Leo he is well heeled enough to tell her to keep it to remember him by. If Leo were down and out common sense would prompt him to take the ring back, because even from seat 102-D the ring looked as if any one could walk into a hock shop and get twenty bucks on it at the least.

"The Great Lover" consequently is a comedy, despite its delightfully pathetic moments. Whenever a play ends happily it is a comedy, no matter how much weep stuff may be scattered through it. And when a hero can deliberately refuse to acept a hockable diamond ring he certainly must be happy or something.

THE ART OF BEING A GREAT LOVER IN REAL LIFE

By LEO DITRICHSTEIN.

WHEN I undertook to create *Jean Paurel* as a great lover, I was confronted with the problem of how to make the character a thoroughly consistent one, that is so far as consistency can be expected of a man who is supposed to be fickle in affairs of the heart.

We are all inclined to cling to our first love, though few of us marry her. The first love is real and its original seed remains planted in our hearts, our minds, our souls, forever. *Jean Paurel* has had loves innumerable, but it is only when he meets *Ethel Warren* that he experiencees the grand passion. Then *Paurel* realizes that he is unable to give her anything that has not been desecrated by the touch of other women. And it is *Bianca*, the woman who was *Paurel's* first love, and whom he deserted in girlhood, that compels his renunciation of *Ethel Warren* in favor of her own son, *Bianca* having married after *Paurel* left her.

"It was not to be," he consoles himself; "I forgot my years when I looked at her. She was my swan song. I will never sing another."

At 20 a young man needs to be guided, while at 30 he wants to do all the guiding. It is not, however, necessary that at 20 he should be guided by a girl older than himself, for nature has taken care to see that the young girl of twenty is morally older than the young man of the same age.

To be happy though married is an art. It is an art to be a good husband or wife, as it is an art to be a good father or mother. The enemy in nearly all marriages is satiety. It is probably nothing new I am telling. Nietzsche, who, like Rousseau, looks at everything from the viewpoint of the happiness of the husband and who demands nothing but concessions and sacrifices from the wife, says very aptly that a man really needs several wives and that the wife who suits him admirably when he is 20 no longer suits him when he is 35. Goethe says that the hand that handles a broom every weekday is the one that knows best how to caress on Sundays, while Nietzsche epigrammatically remarks there would be more happy marriages if married people did not live together.

This is true beyond any doubt. It is this thing of two naturally autonomous and independent beings having to be continually together that makes marriage an abnormal and often painful state. I am simply setting forth facts gleaned from personal observation in searching for evidence as a dramatist and not from personal experience, for I am that most unusual of men—a happily married one.

Every man lives two lives—a relative life to suit his friends, his circumstances, his baser nature, and an essential life, which is his real life. I have often thought I would like to try the experiment of loving the same woman twice, but I have never dared to give up the time to it. Yet it would be impossible for me to respect any woman who did not have the capacity to make me suffer. Such a woman could be won only by a man who could make good, could meet her highest ideals, prove himself worthy of her love by doing the thing she sets her heart upon seeing done.

Real love is more often found by the seeker after amiability in the desert of worldly care in some one who has inherited the virtues of healthy, clean minded progenitors, who lived and begat their kind in the beauty of natural wholesomeness. To have all the quality that attracts love and at the same time to have the quality of being lovely is wealth indeed. It is the best gift the gods can bestow on a mortal—especially on a young woman—it is the honeysuckle of life, the ever blossoming vine which, deep rooted in reverence for life itself, entwines itself delicately, yet firmly, around the personality so richly endowed and draws the sunshine of hope into the nimbus of content that makes the world a paradise for the great lover.

History records many instances of unselfish love. Take Mme. de Stael, for instance. It was after she had spent two years at Coppet writing her "Allemagne," which Napoleon ordered destroyed, banishing her from France. Depressed in spirit, she returned to Geneva, where she met a young army officer, M. Rocca, broken in health from many wounds, but handsome and noble of face, and, as she learned, of irreproachable life. Though he was only 23 and she was 45, the young officer was fascinated by her conversation and refreshed in spirit by her presence. She sympathized with his misfortunes in battle; she admired his courage.

He was lofty in sentiments, tender in heart, and gave her what she had always needed, an unselfish and devoted love. When discouraged by his friends, he replied "I will love her so much that I will finish by making her marry me." They were married in 1811, and the marriage was a singularly happy one. As kind as she was great, loving deeply and receiving love in return, she has left an imperishable name. No wonder that thousands visit that quiet grave at Coppet, beside Lake Geneva.

Love at first sight seems an impudence, and yet it is almost a revelation. It seems as if it were but renewing the relations of a previous existence. Love and reason divide the life of man; we must give to each its due; if it is impossible to attain to virtue by the aid of love without reason, neither can we do so by means of reason alone without love.

The opinion prevails that everywhere and always the first advances were made by the men, the women being passive and coyly reserved. A genuine Romeo wants Juliet, the whole of Juliet and nothing but Juliet. She monopolizes his thoughts by day, his dreams by night, her image blends with everything he sees, her voice with everything he hears. He is a miser who begrudges every smile, every look she bestows on others, and if he had his own way he would sail with her away to some isolated spot and change their names to Mr. and Mrs. Robinson Crusoe.

This is not fanciful hyperbole, but a plain statement in prose of a psychological truth. The imperative desire for an absolute monopoly of one chosen girl, body and soul—and one only—is an essential, invariable ingredient of romantic love. The lover's dream is to marry one particular woman, and her alone.

Jean Paurel lived his life and had his memories, love filled him with affection and took away his disaffection, he had his gayety and amusement, and when he sought happiness it fled. Love is something we cannot have too much of, and I feel much as Steele did when he said to his wife, Lady Elizabeth Hastings, that to know her was a liberal education. Every husband should say that to his wife, whether she is his first love or not.

TOPEKA BOASTS BUSIEST MAYOR IN THE LAND

JAY E. HOUSE of Topeka, Kan., is believed to be the busiest Mayor in the United States. It is not that the office of Chief Executive of that particular municipality makes extraordinary demands on its incumbent, for Topeka's most confident booster claims a population for the town of only 50,000 or thereabout, but Mr. House besides being Mayor is editorial paragrapher, dramatic critic and principal sporting writer of the *Capital*, Topeka's morning newspaper.

The *Capital* seems to be a power in its locality, for not only is the occupant of three positions on its staff Mayor of Topeka but Arthur Capper, the owner and publisher, is Governor of Kansas. The paper is unusual also in the fact that on almost no questions of policy do the owner and the man who is perhaps his highest salaried employee agree. But the Governor permits the Mayor to express his opposing opinions in his paper freely.

The *Capital* was almost the first journal to advocate Statewide prohibition for Kansas and since the law's enactment has been its stanch defender. Also it is a recognized champion of woman suffrage. House, the Mayor, is not enthusiastic for prohibition and he is frankly against woman suffrage, though the women of Kansas vote and he is an officeholder.

Mr. House's paragraph department is, of course, on the editorial page. Wherefore a principle which is strongly advocated by the leader writer is often as vigorously assailed in an adjoining column. Whoever reads the *Capital* reads both sides of nearly every question.

When House ran for Mayor last spring the *Capital* editorially supported his opponent. That mattered naught to him, for he had his own department in which to further his candidacy.

Now that he is Mayor, House uses his column to pay his respects to his critics and to air his official grievances. He is nearly always at war with one or another of the clergymen of the town, who, being assailed by the paragrapher, find solace in letters to the editor which appear in an adjoining column.

When the New York suffragist campaign was in full swing Gov. Capper wrote a letter to several papers in this city describing woman suffrage in Kansas as an unqualified success. "The most hostile protests," he said, "always have come from the vice and saloon elements—the evil, corrupt and roughneck element in politics. This was just a few weeks after the Governor's employee, the Mayor, had printed in the former's paper:

"A man is either for or against suffrage. We're agin it."

THE SUNDAY SUN published a few months ago the opinions of the Mayors of several cities of the experiment of employing policewomen. Mayor House wrote:

"If I have any sense of humor the policewoman is the biggest joke in the world. As I understand it, the duty of a policeman is to protect property and preserve order. A woman can do neither. To decorate her with a star and send her out to do patrol duty merely is to give her license to meddle in her neighbors' business."

Many of House's shafts are levelled at women. Note this plaintive outpouring of a Mayor's heart:

"This column extends its hearty sympathy to Sir Charles Wakefield, who yesterday was elected Lord Mayor of London. Sir Charles shortly will make the acquaintance of every woman in London who has a grievance of any kind."

Here are a few typical Houseisms:

"Marriage also imposes on a man the obligation to kiss his wife's relatives."

"Mrs. Tugg Watts, who invented a rich uncle some time ago, is now working on a Revolutionary ancestor."

"The men depend upon *Dun* and *Bradstreet* for information concerning a man's credit rating, but women merely look at his wife's clothes."

One reason why Topeka likes its Mayor is that he's "different." He showed that when he announced himself as a candidate. He said:

"My purpose in running for Mayor of Topeka is not eleemosynary in its nature. I do not offer myself as a sacrifice to civic benefit. I am running for Mayor primarily because I believe, in the event that I can be elected and make good, that it will help me. It will, I believe, give me some recognition, some prestige, that I cannot achieve in the editorial rooms of a newspaper office."

NEW YORK'S RAPIDLY PASSING LANDMARKS

A FEW years ago, not more than fifteen, some students from a female seminary at Nashville, Tenn., were spending a spring vacation in travel. After two days sightseeing in New York one of the girls was asked what were the most interesting sights she had seen there. She answered, "The horse cars and the girl milking the cow in Broadway."

As New York would not permit overhead wires, horse cars were to be seen in this city long after they had disappeared from the country towns. At this time the block on the east side of Broadway, at the corner of Nineteenth street, was occupied by an old family mansion, the lawn extending the entire block. The family kept a cow and the routine of household work moved on just as it did fifty years before when adjoining lots were similarly occupied. But inventive genius produced a motive power to supersede the horses without the use of overhead wire and the horse car had to go. So had the old mansion, the milkmaid and the cow, and a skyscraper stands on the lot where interested crowds used to watch the milking.

The other day, passing the old home of Washington Irving on Irving place, I saw a man with tools in his hands ascending a ladder and concluded that the old place was doomed. But the carpenter said, "No, not yet, am just going to repair the roof." A great deal of Washington Irving's work was done in this house. It is now owned by the Authors League and the vandal hand of progress has been stayed.

The block from Twenty-second to Twenty-third street and from Eighth avenue to Ninth avenue was formerly owned by Clement C. Moore. He was a most learned man, and with ample means he clung to the old home of his father, who was a bishop. Mr. Moore did many important things, but is remembered only as the man who wrote "'Twas the Night Before Christmas."

At the foot of Broadway the other day a small boy called to his father, "Let's go to the fish theatre." The "fish theatre" is the Aquarium, formerly Castle Garden. It stands as a reminder of many incidents of the past. First a fort, then a place of amusement, then the receiving house for immigrants and now the Aquarium. Here Jenny Lind, the great singer, made her first appearance in this country, and on that occasion P. T. Barnum, her manager, invented reserved seats. So new was the idea that it had to be explained in the advertisements. "Each purchaser of a seat will be given a card containing a number. All seats in the house will be numbered, and the purchaser will be entitled to occupy the seat bearing the number corresponding to [illegible] on his card." So explained the announcement, but it is said there was great confusion till the public [illegible] the idea.

On Nassau street, No. [illegible] was the office of *Noah's Times*, one of the Sunday newspapers of ante-bellum days. Major Noah was a [illegible] character. He became famous as a diplomat. While Minister to Algiers [illegible] was trying to get some valuable concessions from the ruler. [illegible] explained that he had agreed not to give to any Christian country a [illegible] more favorable than he had [illegible] with France and England. [illegible] all right," explained Minister Noah, "we are not a Christian nation," [illegible] he proved it by the [illegible] the satisfaction of the [illegible] his treaty.

For a good while after [illegible] the New York Post office was [illegible] church building on Nassau and [illegible] streets. Up to the time the Post [illegible] on Broadway and Park Row was opened, in 1873, the postal facilities of New York city were [illegible] limited.

The Five Points, where Worth, Baxter and Park streets intersect, [illegible] remain, for time and progress can [illegible] very well efface street crossings. [illegible] this locality is no longer a place of crime and danger. It was here in 17[illegible] that fourteen colored men were burned at the stake because of [illegible] charge of being implicated in a "negro uprising."

Greenwich Village remains and [illegible] some parts the changes are few. [illegible] city streets stop abruptly or tangle themselves up in a woful way when they strike the village. Fourth street crosses Eleventh street and the avenues do various strange things when they reach the Mouse [illegible]. Yes, Greenwich Village is right there still. The old Richmond Hill House that was the centre of [illegible] for generations, is in good condition. This house was the home of Aaron Burr at the time of the duel with Hamilton. It has been moved a few blocks up Macdougal street and now does duty as a restaurant.

Across the street from the old [illegible] office for many years [illegible] rambling building bearing [illegible] "Hospital for the Reception of Sunstruck Patients." Surely there must have been more people afflicted with sunstroke in those days [illegible].

Standing in front [illegible] one could see the street cars passing from the Bowery [illegible] line on Broadway, opposite [illegible] House. Every third [illegible] spicuous sign reading [illegible] are permitted to ride [illegible] colored people could [illegible] two cars. Thus was New York the originator of the Jim Crow idea.